

**SCOPING NOTICE  
DICKIE SPRINGS PLACER GOLD EXPLORATION PROGRAM**

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE**

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AND LOCATION**

Fremont Gold Corp. (FGC) has notified the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Rock Springs Field Office that they are proposing gold placer exploration activities on existing mining claims in the Dickie Springs area located within the administrative boundary of the BLM Rock Springs Field Office. The proposed exploration activities would be located in sections 7, 17, 18, 19, 20 of Township 27 North, Range 100 West, and sections 11, 12, 14 of Township 27 North, Range 101 West, Sixth Principal Meridian, Fremont County, Wyoming. The exploration area is located approximately 60 miles north-northeast of Rock Springs, Wyoming. Access to the area would be provided from Rock Springs via U.S. Highway 191, State Highway 28, Jack Huff Road #446, and existing two-track trails.

The total area directly affected by the exploration sample pits would be approximately 0.92 acre. The analysis area for the proposed exploration activities encompass approximately 5,120 acres, of which approximately 4,680 acres are located on BLM-administered public lands and 440 acres on private land (Figure 1).

**EXPLORATION PROGRAM DETAILS**

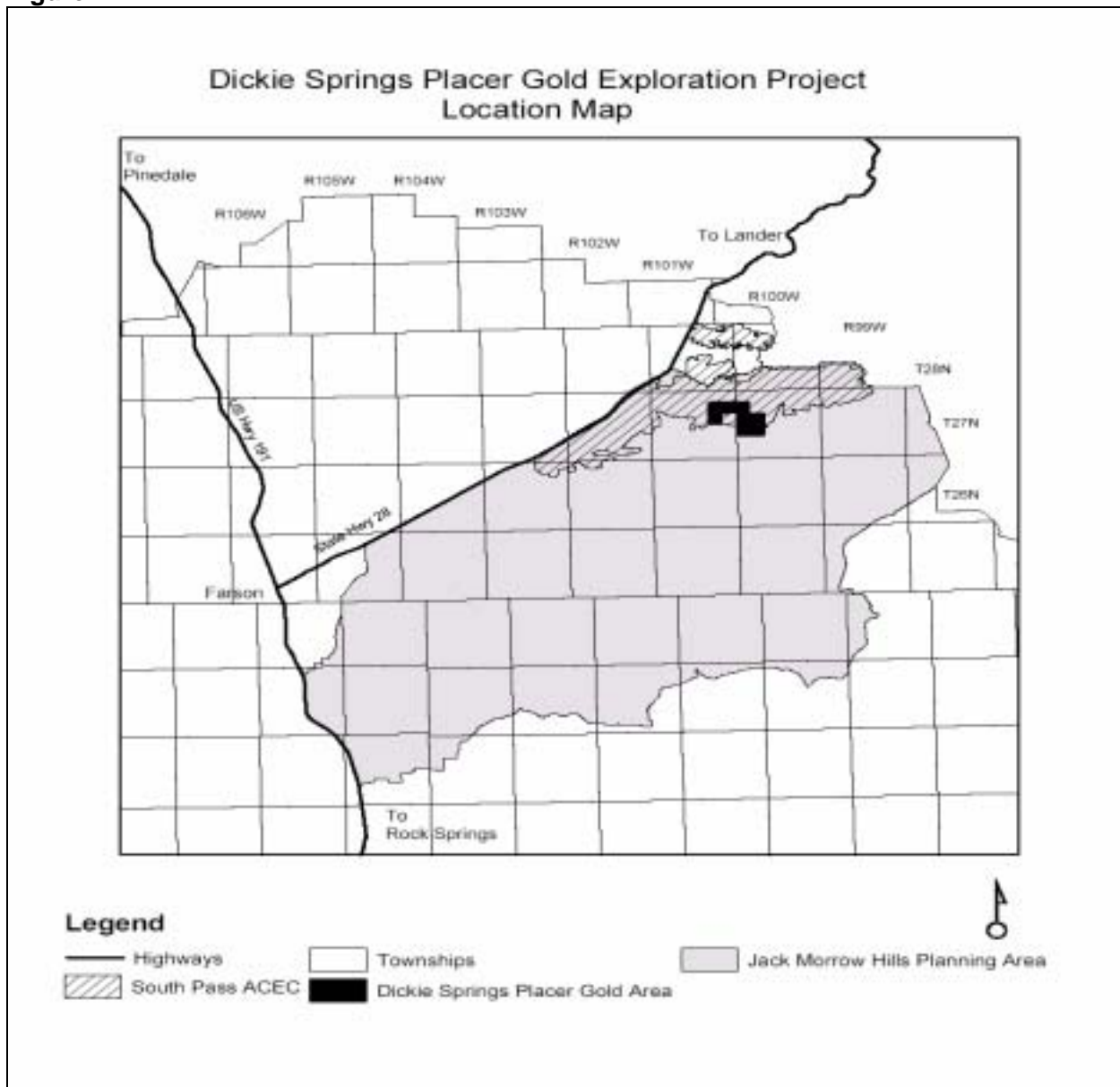
The proposed gold placer exploration program consists of up to 200 pits or trenches located in transects across drainage channels. Each pit would be, at a minimum, approximately four square feet. Depth of each pit would be determined by the depth of the alluvial material. Average depth is estimated to be about 8 feet; however, thicker alluvial material would require a larger pits or trenches no longer than 20 feet.

Samples of approximately 70 pounds each would be collected by hand cutting channel samples in the vertical sidewall of each pit, and then would be processed (concentrated) using a trailer-mounted Knelson concentrator or similar unit at a location away from the area of sampling. Final amalgamation of the concentrates would be accomplished by a commercial laboratory.

Three, two-person crews would collect the samples. One supervisor/geologist and one additional geologist would manage the sample collection program. Equipment would consist of a rubber-tired backhoe, one or two pickup trucks, and miscellaneous hand tools. No road construction is proposed. Off-road travel would be required to reach the sample sites but would be done in a manner to minimize disturbance to vegetation and soil.

Exploration would not be performed in or within one-quarter mile of any permanent surface water; however, each of the drainage channels containing the gravels has intermittent or seasonal flow after large precipitation events or during spring runoff. Sample pits will not be dug in the low spots of the channels.

**Figure 1**



Prior to digging each sample pit with a backhoe, topsoil would be removed and stockpiled nearby for future reclamation. The material dug from the sample pit would be stockpiled separately from the topsoil. After the sample has been removed from the pit, it would be backfilled within one day and then covered with the stockpiled topsoil. A maximum of four pits would remain open at any one time. All sample areas would be reseeded in accordance with BLM requirements.

No chemicals would be used to collect or concentrate the sample material. No fuel or lubricants would be stored onsite. All equipment, refuse, and samples would be removed from the site as soon as the sampling program is complete.

It is anticipated that the exploration program would start as soon as practicable after the Plan of Operations is approved. Sampling and concurrent reclamation would be conducted over approximately 10 weeks.

A reclamation bond would be required, and release of the bond would be sought when a satisfactory vegetative cover is established for two consecutive years. Reclamation success would be determined by comparing adjacent native vegetation.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PLANS AND DOCUMENTS**

**Green River Resource Management Plan:** This document directs management of public lands administered by the BLM within the Rock Springs Field Office area. The objective for management of locatable minerals is to provide opportunities to explore, locate, and develop mining claims while protecting other resource values. The public lands affected by this action have valid existing mining claims. However, the area affected falls within the South Pass Historic Landscape Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The management objective for the ACEC is to protect the visual and historical integrity of the historic trails and surrounding viewscape. Most of the ACEC is also open to exploration and development of locatable minerals. A plan of operation is required to address measures to mitigate affects to the viewshed before any mining claim activity is allowed.

The location of these existing mining claims fall within the area under analysis for the Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Plan (JMH CAP). Interim uses of the area may occur under certain conditions. Actions may be approved if BLM determines that they will not cause significant impacts, or will not limit or prejudice the choice of management options that may be considered for the JMH CAP (40 CFR 1506.1(a), 40 CFR 1506.1(c), 40 CFR 1506.1(c)3). Surface disturbing activities may be prohibited if the following occur:

Slopes greater than 20%; forest-type area such as juniper, limber pine, and aspen; tall sagebrush habitat (sagebrush 4 feet high or taller); badland areas with highly erodible soils; all mountain shrub communities such as mountain mahogany, bitterbrush, and service berry (usually associated with 20% slopes); all big game severe winter relief/crucial winter range areas and big game birthing areas; or other sensitive areas and situations identified.

In areas that do not meet the criteria defined above, all proposed land use activities and other new surface disturbing proposals would be evaluated and considered on a case-by-case basis, to determine whether or not any management options would be prejudiced or foregone.

Regulations governing implementation of the 1872 Mining Act, as amended, are found in 43 CFR 3809. The purpose of the regulations provides for prevention of unnecessary or undue degradation of public lands by operations authorized by the mining laws. Anyone intending to develop mineral resources on the public lands must prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the land and reclaim disturbed areas.

## **NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT**

The BLM has determined that an environmental assessment will be prepared. The impact analysis presented in the EA will allow for one of two outcomes.

- 1) the proposed exploration program would not result in significant impacts and a Decision Record with a Finding of No Significant Impact (DR/FONSI) could be signed (which would allow the exploration program to be implemented), or
- 2) the exploration program, as proposed, would result in significant impacts and would require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

One element of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is scoping. Scoping is conducted prior to the preparation of an EA to determine reasonable development alternatives to be considered in the document, identify environmental and socioeconomic issues of concern related to the proposed project, and determine the depth and range of analyses for issues addressed in the document.

This scoping notice has been prepared to enable government agencies, the general public, and other interested parties to participate in, and contribute to, the analysis process. Public input is important in establishing the scope of analysis for any NEPA document, and the BLM encourages public participation.

## **IDENTIFIED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

The following issues and concerns have been identified to date. This list is not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather to serve as a starting point for public input. Once all issues and concerns have been gathered, corresponding resource disciplines would be identified to conduct analysis for individual issues and concerns.

- Congressionally designated historic trails and variants thereof including the Oregon-Mormon Pioneer-California-Pony Express National Historic Trails
- Point-of-Rocks to South Pass Stage Road
- South Pass National Historic Landmark
- South Pass Historic Landscape Area of Critical Environmental Concern
- Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Planning effort
- Potential effects upon wildlife and their habitats, particularly the elk birthing area
- BLM sensitive plant (large-fruited bladderpod, meadow pussytoes) and animal species (i.e., greater sage-grouse), including listed, proposed for listing and candidate species
- Potential effects on wetland and riparian areas
- Potential impacts to surface hydrology and nearby recharge zones
- Potential impacts to sensitive soils
- Reclamation of disturbed areas
- Potential effects to cultural and historical resources
- Native American Religious Concerns
- Class II Visual Resource Management Area
- Divide Basin Wild Horse Herd Management Area
- Use of vehicles off-road

## **TIMING NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS**

Government agencies, the public, and other interested parties are encouraged to participate throughout the environmental analysis process to help in identifying the level of analysis needed, alternatives to be considered, issues or concerns that should be assessed, mitigation

opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure that the analysis process is comprehensive.

Comments are due September 10, 2004. Please send your comments to:

Attn: Dickie Springs Placer Gold Project  
BLM-Rock Springs Field Office  
280 Highway 191 North  
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901  
Fax: 307.352.0328  
email: rock\_springs\_wymail@blm.gov (please refer to Dickie Springs Placer Gold Project in the subject line)

If you have any questions, please contact Jeff Clawson at 307-352-0323 or Teri Deakins at 307-352-0211.

## **INITIAL MAILING LIST**

The scoping notice initial mailing distribution includes the following list of agencies, individuals, industries, organizations, and media.

### **Government Offices**

Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming State Office (910, 912, 920, 930)  
Bureau of Land Management, Rawlins and Lander Field Offices  
U.S. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Wyoming State Government Offices: Office of the Governor, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, State Historic Preservation Office, State Planning Office, State Lands and Investments, Department of Environmental Quality (land division, air quality division, water quality division), Geological Survey, Wyoming State Livestock Board

### **Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Plan, Cooperating Agencies**

Fremont County Commission, Popo Agie Conservation District, Sublette County Commission, Sublette County Conservation District, Sweetwater County Conservation District, Sweetwater County Commission, Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality – Water, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Wyoming Governor's Office, Wyoming Livestock Board, Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission, Wyoming State Historical Preservation Office, Wyoming State Engineer's Office, Wyoming State Engineer's Office (Water), Wyoming State Geological Survey, Wyoming State Lands and Investments

### **Elected and Other Officials**

Fremont County Libraries: Dubois Branch Library, Fremont County Library, Pavillion Library, Riverton Branch Library, Shoshoni Library, Yablonski Memorial Library (Hudson)  
County of Fremont, Sublette, and Sweetwater  
Mayors of Lander, Riverton  
State Senators: Cale Case, Rae Lynn Job, Robert A. Peck, Delaine Roberts  
State Representatives: Jim Allen, Marty Martin, David R. Miller, Del McOmie, Monte Olsen,

Frank Philp  
Sweetwater County Libraries, Green River, Rock Springs  
U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Cubin, Bonnie Cannon, Representative  
U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, Lyn Shanaghy, Representative  
U.S. Senator Craig Thomas, Pati Smith, Representative

### **Public Land Users and User Groups**

Bar X Sheep Company  
Biodiversity Conservation Alliance  
Chevron Chemical Company  
Environmental Defense  
Hellyer Limited Partnership  
Independent Petroleum Association of Mountain States  
John P. Lockridge  
National Wildlife Federation  
Native American Tribes: Eastern Shoshone, Northern Ute, Northern Arapaho, Shoshone-Bannock  
OCTA  
People for the USA  
Petroleum Association of Wyoming  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Sierra Club, Northern Plains Representative  
Southwest Wyoming Industrial Association  
White Acorn Sheep Company  
Wilderness Society  
Wyoming Association of Professional Archaeologists  
Wyoming Chapter of the Sierra Club  
Wyoming Outdoor Council  
Wyoming Public Lands Council  
Wyoming Wildlife Federation

### **News Media**

Newspapers: Pinedale Roundup, Sublette Examiner, Kemmerer Gazette, Rock Springs Daily Rocket-Miner, Casper Star-Tribune, Green River Star, Wyoming State Journal, Uinta County Herald

Radio Stations: KQSW/KRKK/KSIT - Rock Springs, KUGR - Green River, KYCS - Rock Springs, KMER – Kemmerer, KUWR - Laramie

Television Stations: KTWO-TV - Casper, KCWY-TV – Casper, KFNB-TV – Casper, KGWC-TV - Casper